

# LIVING, WORKING AND TRAVELLING

New Processes of Hybridization for the Spaces  
of Hospitality and Work

edited by Francesco Scullica, Elena Elgani



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# LIVING, WORKING AND TRAVELLING

New Processes of Hybridization for the Spaces  
of Hospitality and Work



edited by Francesco Scullica, Elena Elgani

**D.I.** **FRANCOANGELI**  
DESIGN INTERNATIONAL

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# Foreword

*Silvia Piardi<sup>1</sup>, Luisa Collina<sup>2</sup>*

This book collects the results of a research funded by FARB - Fondo di Ateneo per la Ricerca di Base (University Fund for Basic Research), aimed at supporting researches at the Design Department of the Politecnico di Milano.

The starting point of the research was the analysis of a new hybrid dimension, springing from the contemporary overlap and integration of behaviours, functions and objects that make our world increasingly more complex to conceive and design.

Nowadays the field of interior design must deal with issues that adhere to the evolution of new spatial realities, characterized by functional and temporal mixes which have been emerging in recent years.

This topic highlights how the main objective of the scientific field is to go beyond the most recurrent situations, investigating innovative contexts, scenarios and trends.

The research focused on the hybridization between two specific fields of interior design, that of hospitality and that of work, which play a fundamental role in the lives of individuals and are therefore the subject of new studies, since these fields have been changing following new fluid ways of “living, working, travelling”, that characterize our contemporary lives.

The research was carried out through studies of professors and researchers of the Design Department and through didactic activities, complementary to the research, developed during courses and workshops held both at the School of Design of the Politecnico di Milano and in Foreign Schools.

This research approach is typical of the design system of the Politecnico di Milano (that includes the School of Design, the Design Department and POLI.design): research activities and didactic activities both contribute to the definition of new scenarios for contemporary identities and “performances” of advanced systems of spaces-products-services-experiences.

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Furthermore this approach always seeks relationships with the professional and productive realities of the design system, with particular reference to the Milanese one – this is done both for a constructive “service” towards companies, design and consulting firms, and for relating the Politecnico design graduate to the professional world.

The connection with the professional and productive realities is visible in this book in which contributions by the scientific-academic world come together with considerations and thoughts by professionals, brands and business enterprises. Therefore a text that deals in an original way with contemporary themes that concern our daily lives.

# The “Living, Working and Travelling: Interior Design for New Scenarios Between Work and Hospitality Field” Research Project Development

*Francesco Scullica<sup>1</sup>, Elena Elgani<sup>2</sup>*

The growth of the world population and the increase of inhabitants in urban settlements, together with the constant technological developments, impose a continuous rethinking of ways and places in which we live, in order to identify new strategies and spatial solutions capable of responding to the changing needs of living, considered as “man’s being on earth” (Heidegger, 1954) – that related to interiority, an essential feeling for human beings, because our life needs a private and individual condition as well as “external things, the city, the world, and he is satisfied with them or he misses them” (La Cecla, 1993, p. 69).

Over time, living has become more and more composite and multifaceted, both in relation to the numerous declinations of individuality and with respect to technological developments and socio-economic changes, because “the environment that surrounds us is a dynamic intersection of fast and complex social, cultural and environmental entities” (Sayegh, 2018, p. 9), and it requires the design world to consider multiple behaviours and activities such as those related to work, to travel – considered as an opportunity for leisure or a necessity –, to relax – dealing with well-being and care of the individual –, that in the past were experienced in different ways. In particular, renewed attention must be paid to the identification of really appropriate and sustainable design solutions for contemporary generations and especially for future ones, not only in terms of energy and environmental sustainability, but also of social sustainability.

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Considering that today more than half of the world's population lives in urban settlements and that the number of inhabitants of the earth will increase to reach 10 billion people in 2050, the United Nations estimated that in 2050 66% of the world population<sup>3</sup> will live in megalopolis and large cities. Therefore, the attention of the interior design disciplines must initially focus on living in densely populated urban contexts, where the per capita space for citizens, residents or temporary visitors, is progressively reduced; this condition imposes necessary rethinking of the relationship between the individual and his personal space.

Starting from these considerations, the sharing of services and spaces, the flexibility of housing, and the reduction and miniaturization of objects, become a necessity even before being representative of new lifestyles. The new attitudes about living require to think of new strategies for the design and definition of spaces as well as products and services, considering that the needs of contemporary citizens have deeply changed and multiplied compared to the past. At the same time, citizens are interested and able to actively participate in defining the new contexts for living. Carlo Ratti, interviewed by Maria Grazia Mattei during the events Meet The Media Guru, argues that cities of the future will be livable and “smart”, in terms of awareness and responsiveness to the needs of their inhabitants, only if they are able to:

avere un'anima: ecco perché gli edifici e i servizi intelligenti hanno bisogno di cittadini intelligenti, “cittadini attivi”. Una città intelligente non è creata da persone che rispondono agli input, ma dal cittadino che svolge un ruolo essenziale: il ruolo principale nel processo di raccolta e condivisione dei dati. I cittadini connessi saranno il motore dei cambiamenti urbani nelle città del futuro (Ratti, 2013)<sup>4</sup>.

In fact, fast and efficient transportation and technological developments – represented for example by mobile digital devices that allow instant connection between individuals located in different parts of the globe, the

<sup>3</sup> Retrieved from the World Population Prospects published by United Nation. See the link in bibliography.

<sup>4</sup> “must also have a soul: this is why buildings and smart services need smart citizens, ‘active citizens’. A smart city isn't made by people just responding to inputs, but by citizens performing an essential role: the leading role in the process of data collection and sharing. Connected citizens are the engine of urban change in the city of the future” (Ratti C. (2013), *Smart City, Smart Citizen*, edited by Mattei M. G., Egea, Milano, p. 25).

immediate exchange of data as well as the IoT for interactive and dynamic environments – for the very first time in human history offer individuals connections and movements, both physical and virtual, that are characterized by great speed. All these factors determine a revolution in many areas: from the way of conceiving work and the activities connected to it, to the choice of the places where to live and from which to move easily – that implies the organization and planning of personal life in relation to affections and friendships –, up to the choices related to ways of living and of consumption of products and services. The speed of connections, obtained through processes of digitization of activities and services, has led to a dematerialization of physical places, in favor of virtual ones, in which to perform certain activities. At the same time, the ease of travelling has allowed to reach places, that were previously far, in significantly short time. People can move much faster by connecting to each other quickly in a single network; in this scenario some spaces seem to lose significance in favor of others that acquire importance.

For instance, many individuals spend part of their lives in airports, in hotels or in their own offices and very few hours in their own houses. This attitude involves new concepts related to life, work and travel: the “mobile” dimension of a large number of professional activities, particularly those related to “smart working”, goes beyond the traditional concept of office as the space in which to spend most of the time for the fulfillment of duties, and unfolds a versatile system of spaces-services that encourages the sense of community, the use of new technologies and the integration of activities previously deployed in other spaces. In fact,

today’s work is no longer an activity performed in a single place, we are in a complete process of convergence, so more and more offices can offer our existence pleasant moments. Nowadays offices are no longer just a system of workstations – they are slowly transformed to match with new lifestyles (Berberi, 2017).

As well, the “mobile” dimension of hospitality considers new ways of travelling and visiting, which transform the receptive structures from spaces in which guests enjoy a stopover to destinations, underlining a significant link with the context, particularly urban one. In addition, hotels and hostels are enriched with new functions and services, such as co-working spaces or areas for individual work, where people can rest and at the same time work in pleasant places with high-quality facilities. All this leads to a distortion of traditional lifestyles in favor of the emergence of habits and behaviors that are unusual compared to the past, because they are based on physical and relational mobility. Reduction of time spent in using the spaces, new ways of fruition, the request of previously unneeded services: these are some of the

new requirements for contemporary individuals to relate with existing spaces. From a design point of view, the contemporary transformations involve a disruption of the relationship between spaces and activities connected to them: a well-known example is that of free lancers who can decide not to work in an office, but to carry out their business from cafes and other places that were not originally designed and equipped to accommodate these functions. As anticipated by Andrea Branzi, in the last twenty years we have witnessed a process of “disposal of all the main functions; at the same time, the improper use of almost all the existing ones is spreading” (Branzi, 2003, p. XI). The process is still underway and has been the subject of many considerations, also because these changes do not take place as sudden revolutions but “with imperceptible bradyseism and deep mutations” (Branzi, 2003, p. XI). In fact, these are evolutionary processes whose outcomes are multiple and continuous; therefore, the aim of the design disciplines, and in particular those related to interior design, is to try to identify guidelines that support a sustainable development for the contemporary and future inhabitants of urban settlements.

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School of Design – Politecnico di Milano, HEAD – Haute Ecole d'Art et de Design (Genève), Hochschule für Gestaltung Schwäbisch Gmünd (Schwäbisch Gmünd), OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University (Oslo), ÉSAD Orléans – Ecole Supérieure d'Art et de Design d'Orléans (Orléans).



## **The FARB Research “Living, Working and Travelling: Interior Design for New Scenarios Between Work and Hospitality Field”**

The research “Living, Working and Travelling: Interior Design for New Scenarios Between Work and Hospitality Field” – funded by the FARB project (Fondo Ateneo Ricerca di Base) of the Design Department of Politecnico di Milano, and coordinated by prof. Francesco Scullica with the research group composed of Silvia Piardi, Giuliano Simonelli, Luca Guerrini, Maresa Bertolo, Anna Anzani, Cinzia Pagni, Gisella Veronese, Maria Rosanna Fossati, Elena Elgani – has investigated a specific area of interest in the field of interior design, paying attention to the new processes of integration, hybridization and influence that involve the transformation of consolidated spatial typologies or the definition of new spaces. In particular, the research focused on the investigation of new relationships between spaces for hospitality – accommodation facilities for travellers in urban context such as hotels and hostels – and work spaces for “knowledge workers”, such as offices and co-working spaces, with the intent of highlighting and analyzing these new relations that have been defined between spaces that in the past were very different from each other, and that today show overlaps and similarities, both in functional and spatial terms. In fact, spaces for hospitality and places for work share some relevant aspects which have been investigated to determine new scenarios and new spatial typologies; these can be defined through the specific approach of interior design, that is focused on space but also on processes and systems of relations between spaces-furniture-services and methods of communication.

The starting point for this issue arose from the experience of some degree thesis<sup>5</sup> that have shown the overcoming of the concept of traditional office in relation to the phenomenon of “smart working”, a new organizational system for managing the professional activities of medium and large companies, that has introduced a redefinition of working times and of spaces dedicated to workers. The ongoing transformations of working models require to rethink office spaces and to design responsive and inclusive environments considering

<sup>5</sup> Particularly the 2015 Master Degree thesis in Interior Design at the Politecnico di Milano by Alessia Mansutti and Sarah Nikkar titled “H-Office. Vivere, lavorare, viaggiare nell’epoca della rivoluzione dell’ufficio”, and the one by Giovanni Colombara titled “Nomad office for nomad workers. Progettazione di strutture per i lavoratori della conoscenza in relazione all’odierno contesto lavorativo”.

the changing needs of workers. At the same time, the hospitality system widens the offer of solutions, capable of responding to different requests of accommodation by offering services and new functions previously hosted in other spaces.

The study has been carried out by the FARB group through a bibliographic and web research, the analysis of case studies – best practices that show how the topic develops –, and interviews with experts. The research was also supported by educational design experiments related to the Laboratorio di Metaprogetto of the Interior Design Degree Course of the School of Design of Politecnico di Milano (a.a. 2016-17 and 2017-18): the innovative experience of distance learning with prof. Petter Øyan of the OsloMet in Oslo (a.a. 2017-18), the international workshops at the HEAD in Geneva (2017), at the Hochschule fuer Gestaltung in Schwaebisch Gmuend (2017 and 2018), at the ESAD in Orleans (2018). Furthermore, the research has generated some in-depth analysis with the Masters programme thesis in Interior Design by Marta Redigolo and Elena Vezzali titled “Connect: dinamiche di ibridazione e condivisione nel co-living: dalla dimensione lavorativa all’abitare nello scenario contemporaneo” (April 2018), and with the traineeship experiences of Alessandra La Terza, Alexandra Ivanova, Marta Redigolo, Elena Vezzali, Muyun Wang, Yinan Xu, Susana Soto Bustamante.

The first results of the research were presented during the international conference “HOW Hospitality & Workscape. Living, Working and Travelling: Interior Design for New Scenarios Between Hospitality and Work Fields”, held on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2017 at the Department of Design of Politecnico di Milano, and organized by the FARB research group. The conference was supported by Sistema Design, School of Design and POLI.design, Assufficio, Federlegnoarredo, together with the media partner DDN and About Hotel, and Digital Strategies for Design for the social media report. It was held during the “Settimana del lavoro agile 2017”, a week dedicated to the debate on new smart ways of working in Milano.

The conclusions of the research are gathered in this book, that collects the contributions of professors and researchers from the Department of Design of Politecnico di Milano and of other European Schools.

The text consists of six chapters; the first is more theoretical and regards general topics on contemporary interior and spatial design related to the fields of living, working and travelling; the contributions underlines the relevance of new behaviors and needs for the definition of spaces for contemporary workers and knowledge travellers, as well as the development of new aesthetic languages related to the process of hybridization.

The second chapter focuses on the contemporary dimension of workplaces and explores the impact that hybridization has on work spaces. New typologies

of spaces for the dynamic and flexible work are analyzed i.e. “smart office”, “co-working spaces”, and new urban solutions for travellers who need a temporary workstation while staying in an unfamiliar environment.

The third chapter regards hospitality; the contributions analyze new hybrid formats, such as co-living and experiential and narrative experiments, and describes essential elements that define these new spaces, that are more open to different varieties of users and offer a wide range of assorted services.

The fourth chapter considers the process of hybridization in the fields of restoration, urban and game design, emphasizing the relationship between individuals and public spaces; specifically the contributions investigate the design of inclusive work spaces and their links with the city, the importance of game activities in shared public places and the possibility of reusing existing buildings to accommodate new activities and functions more closely linked to contemporary needs.

The fifth chapter deals with specific didactic experiences, based on many of the concepts described in the previous chapters. In particular, the contributions related to “learning arenas” and “writing spaces” describe places where students can work and study, while other didactic experiences focus on the design of hybrid spaces and on the improvement of the quality of the work process in contemporary work spaces.

The sixth chapter focuses on the International Conference “HOW Hospitality & Workscape. Living, Working and Travelling: Interior Design for New Scenarios Between Hospitality and Work Fields”, and collects the thoughts of experts, designers, consultants and companies that took part in the round table, discussing on the increasingly significant relationship between spaces and services for the work and the hospitality fields. The chapter ends with a contribution that investigates new tools for designing the experience of accessibility.

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## **THE SCENARIO OF HYBRIDIZATION**